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Exhibiting the Example: Virginia Woolf's Shoes

John Nash

It would appear that Virginia Woolf had a thing about footwear. Shoes, slippers and boots, “old,” “shabby,” or lost, recur in her fiction and also make pointed appearances in her non-fiction. In *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a “pair of shoes” has been “shed and left” in the deserted holiday home of the Ramsays, still keeping “the human shape” which indicates “how once they were filled and animated” (194). In the late novel *The Waves* (1931), we find “the boot without laces stuck, black as iron, in the sand” (148). The posthumously-published *Between the Acts* (1941) has Giles Oliver crush a choking snake, after which “The white canvas on his tennis shoes was bloodstained and sticky. But it was action. Action relieved him. He strode to the Barn, with blood on his shoes” (119). These images of unexplained loss and violent death bring out two of the more obvious associations that shoes carry in Woolf's writing. In this essay, I explore less what shoes stand *for* than *how* they stand; that is to say, my emphasis will not be on the interpretation of shoes as objects that carry the burden of something else (violence, loss, etc.) but on the ways in which shoes step forth in order to foreground the practice of exemplification. My focus is on *Night and Day*, *Jacob's Room* and the essays and reviews of literary tourism (or literary geography, as she also called it).

In these works, Woolf often associates shoes with particular museological contexts so that they become for her a kind of shorthand by which she questions practices of exhibition and exemplification—issues that go to the heart of her career-long concern with modes of representation and perception. Shoes feature less as personal memorials (heavy with the weight of pathos) and more as figures in a narrative mode which foregrounds the selection, artifice, and experience of the exhibited example. This argument has four stages that correspond to sections of this essay. In

the first place, a conceptual framework of examples, things and memorial objects is drawn upon in order to clarify how Woolf's shoes function. While the ideas of Agamben, Brown, and others are discussed here, I draw on shoes not in order to exemplify their work but to chart some of the ways in which Woolf's writing was already, from its own perspective and with slightly different conclusions, asking similar questions. The second stage shows that Woolf's interest in shoes comes from her critical interest in literary tourism, specifically in writers' house museums. In *Night and Day* and in non-fictional responses to museological practices, she questioned the use of shoes as personal memorial objects. I argue that shoes should instead be seen as an example of the example, that is, as a reference to those house museums and as a questioning of metonymic exemplification. The third section then shows, in a close reading of *Jacob's Room*, how she explored problems of selection, display, and classification. Jacob's Cambridge room, and his shoes, are best read not as personal objects, or as symbols of loss, but as devices through which Woolf pursued her implicit critique of museological practice. This critique is brought out most strongly in the final section of the essay, which shows that Woolf consistently emphasized the role of the observer and the historical situation of the museum. These aspects of her approach can be seen through her use of the umbrella as an item of disruption and somatic experience. A symbol of repression and exclusion, the umbrella offers a counter-object to the shoe, for the umbrella may be said to be the object of the observer as the shoe is the object of the observed.

My argument, then, is that Woolf deploys the shoe as a code for the attempted exemplification of the subject practiced by house museums and literary tourism. Neither a metonym nor a "singularity" in Agamben's sense, shoes are a way to highlight how those questions of representation, classification, and selection which underpin exemplification emphasize the artifice and arbitrariness of that practice. What I see as Woolf's historicization of museum culture is furthered by the entry of the observer and her umbrella, by which she signals that the epistemological questions of exemplification occur within everyday lives.

Exemplary things

Exemplification runs as a topic related to classification through philosophy from Aristotle to Kant and beyond. It might be said that the example both condenses and disperses signification: it may be an “example of,” in that it points to its classification or paradigm, but at the same time it steps away from its “class” or “rule” as an irreducible entity that has been singled out. It is thus both the privileged “exemplary” and ordinary “for example.” The oddity of its status has drawn discussion from thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Derrida. In Agamben’s reading of Aristotle, the example works by analogy and not by metaphor: it does not deploy a “transfer of meaning” (18) but retains its own significance. As Agamben develops the term, the example is a peculiarly radical category which “calls into question the dichotomous opposition between the particular and the universal which we are used to seeing as inseparable from the procedures of knowing, and presents instead a singularity irreducible to any of the dichotomy’s two terms” (19). Agamben thereby rewrites the Kuhnian (and Foucauldian) model in which a paradigm is created by a powerful example that allows the formulation of a new mode of inquiry by virtue of its repeatability and apparent explanatory capacity, and he replaces it with the idea of singularity. For Agamben, then, the work of exemplification is best not seen as a shuttle between example and rule but as a singular force, or being, by which the self-expression of the entity suspends its belonging to a general group: “it is never possible to separate its exemplarity from its singularity” (31). In these terms, exemplification is no longer an epistemological problem but an ontological one: “the paradigm has an ontological quality. It refers not to the cognitive relation between subject and object but to being” (32). One implication of Agamben’s account of the example is that it cannot be exemplified in its own terms; that is to say, any such attempt would initiate its own distinctive retelling of the thesis. Another way to put this would be to say that examples form narratives: they are not merely explanatory, or creatively paradigmatic in Kuhn’s sense, but also carry a distinctiveness that propels narrative and opens it to multivocality.¹

Recent work in thing theory would appear to be indebted to Agamben’s approach to the question of the example. In Bill Brown’s terms, there is something “thingly” about this notion of the example. In Brown’s well-known distinction, *objects* are those items which we know and use,

whose functionality is unproblematic and which, existing in a stable relationship with their owners or users, can be placed and read (offering epistemological security); whereas *things*, on the other hand, are not constrained by subjective belonging, and outperform their functionality in arresting and unusual ways. If objects are representative, for instance in denoting their class of items, or in embodying cultural values, or in belonging to a subjective appropriation, they might be thought of as something like conventional metonymic examples (an examples of their class). The thing's oddity, on the other hand, is also its singularity: it is non-representative and finally irreducible to subjective appropriation. In sidestepping the subject-object relationship and emphasizing materiality, the uncontrolled thing speaks as a singular example in the manner of Agamben's analysis.

It might appear question-begging to exemplify this, but Brown has provided numerous examples. It is especially apposite that Brown illustrated the distinction between "thing" and "object" by comparing Woolf's short story "Solid Objects" with *Jacob's Room*. In his analysis, "Solid Objects" "insists on" displaying thingness, by "liberating" artefacts away from "their status as determinate signs" and "rendering a life of things that is irreducible to the history of human subjects." The broken glass that forms the protagonist's collection is "nothing but glass."² With *Jacob's Room*, by contrast, its "pathos . . . depends precisely on that reduction [of material object to human subject], on the symbolic and metonymic power of objects" (12) and Brown therefore implies that this novel is effective insofar as it establishes an association of objects with their subject or owner. Brown's use of the term "pathos" to describe what he calls the "metonymic power of objects" in *Jacob's Room* appears to refer to the final image of Jacob's shoes which remain after his presumed death at war: "'What am I to do with these, Mr Bonamy?' She held out a pair of Jacob's old shoes" (247).

Brown's analysis is in keeping with a long critical history in Woolf studies which emphasizes metonymy and pathos in the closing scene. Alex Zwerdling repeats an old story: "The significance of the scene is clarified by an anecdote about Woolf recalled by one of her friends: '....When Leonard went away, she said, she didn't miss him at all. Then suddenly she caught sight of a pair of his empty shoes, which had kept the position and shape of his feet—and was ready to dissolve into tears instantly'" (911). Although readers may doubt that this anecdote "clarifies" those

final lines of the novel, many have continued to view Jacob's shoes metonymically. Although for Laura Marcus, the anecdote implies "too neat a 'fit' between the shoes and their owner" yet "the synecdochical nature of the shoes—they 'stand in' for the absent Jacob—is again appropriate in a novel in which 'character' has been represented in flashes and fragments" (93). For Robert Reginio, the shoes are a personal monument (unlike the public memorial of the cenotaph), which again operates by synecdoche: "Jacob's shoes stand metonymically for Jacob *as a fragment*" (93).³ This is in keeping with the association made by many readers between Jacob and his inanimate possessions, a critical convention, echoed by Brown, that relies upon the shoes as metonyms—put simply, they stand in for Jacob in an exemplary way, figuring his absent body and its death. Brown had even held up *Jacob's Room* as a good example: unlike the "unrepresentative fragment" (13) that is "Solid Objects," the novel should be seen as "representative" of Woolf's writing precisely because of this apparent metonymy between shoe and owner. Indeed, what Brown sees as differing perspectives within her writing make Woolf herself a good example with which to illustrate his thing/object distinction.

In the analysis that follows, I argue against this critical consensus (which Brown apparently endorses): the shoes in *Jacob's Room* are not metonyms or objects. Nor do I want to read Woolf's shoes as if they could themselves exemplify Brown's things or Agamben's singularity. My interest, then, is not in the indelible thingness of Woolf's depictions of shoes, if they have any, or in their stated materiality (the canvas, or rubber, or leather of actual shoes), and nor is it finally in their symbolic objectness (of loss, etc.). Instead, this essay asks *why* shoes came to seem so important to Woolf and finds the answer in her critique of literary tourism. She was drawn to shoes, through encountering them in museological contexts, noting the representative load they carry, but she was also struck by the way in which they held out an apparent singularity and wonder. While shoes may on occasion appear to be singular, and therefore perhaps versions of Agamben's notion of the example, Woolf's interest goes further than this, for by invoking the museum context she historicizes the construction of exemplarity and places it within a tactile as well epistemological frame.

Shoes are an interesting and complex case because of the ways in which they straddle the subject/object divide, a quality exacerbated by the way that, in Woolf and in certain aspects of museum culture more

generally, they became associated with death.⁴ It is worth noting that the identification entailed by pathos *may* be indicated by shoes and clothing in particular, as Woolf's tears for the absent Leonard perhaps indicate. Psychologists agree that such objects can become prosthetic: as "their soles take on the marks of the owner's gait" they may become "singularized, bearing the stamp of individuality and everyday experience" (Lupton 144). Although usually objects of mass production, shoes, and other items, carry the specificity of the owner-wearer even to the extent of making them so shaped to an individual that they cannot with ease be worn by another. They can thus become "appropriated objects"—commodities which, anthropologists like Daniel Miller suggest, have been transformed through personal use and transmuted through "that process of objectification by which we create ourselves" into personalized objects of "potentially inalienable culture" (215) that are constitutive of subjectivity. Such shoes would become especially endowed with pathos in death. Studies of death suggest that shoes may indeed be exemplary and pathetic: "The transformative power that death has upon lived material environments can also render the most familiar objects strange or disturbing by degrees. What was once a well-worn, comfortable pair of shoes might become, after the death of their owner, the most powerful register of loss" (Hallam 43). While these interpretations of our emotional capacity to identify with a pair of shoes may go some way to explaining critics' reactions to the ending of *Jacob's Room*, Woolf was well aware that memorial shoes need not be pathetic.

Re-reading *Robinson Crusoe* at the beginning of 1926, Woolf noted that an image of empty shoes invoked the death of Crusoe's shipmates. She comments: "A sense of desolation and of the deaths of many men is conveyed by remarking in the most prosaic way in the world, 'I never saw them afterwards, or any sign of them except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows'" (381). Woolf draws attention to the disparity between the casualness of the narration ("the most prosaic way in the world") and the import of the image. Indeed, it would be this peculiar elegiac *bathos*—rather than the pathos found by Brown and others—that Woolf would exploit so successfully (as in the famous parenthetical death in *To the Lighthouse*). Indeed, the image of the dead sailors' shoes illustrated a mode of novel-writing which her reading notes refer to as "particularity": "Every thing fitted in no looseness. This is one kind of reality" she entered in her reading notebook (Silver 21).⁵ It was precisely

Defoe's aversion to pathos that impressed Woolf. This is not to say that Woolf merely followed Defoe's path but to point to her recognition that memorial shoes are only objects of pathos from a certain novelistic, or curatorial, perspective and that from another perspective they may form a quite different approach. As the following section argues, Woolf was fascinated with shoes precisely because they are exhibited and found in museological and memorial contexts which, one can argue, *question* our reading of their pathos. That is not to deny that she too associates them with death, and laments the passing of their wearers, but to suggest that the practices by which objects are sometimes made to stand as representative examples entailed what was to Woolf a questionable epistemology.

Writers' home museums

The primary setting of Woolf's second novel, *Night and Day* (1919), is the home of the daughter and granddaughter of "the great poet, Richard Alardyce" (9). Part of the home is dedicated to preserving his writerly things, among which an "original manuscript" (10) sits on the table. Particular attention is then drawn to "a pair of large, worn slippers, one of which Katharine picked up." Why are the slippers significant? Why are they there, and why does Katharine pick one up? By the time she wrote this, writers' footwear was familiar to Woolf, perhaps too familiar, as emblems commonly displayed within writers' house museums. The rise of the house museum, and Woolf's non-fictional accounts of literary tourism, provide a necessary context to *Night and Day*, and indeed, to Woolf's depictions of shoes in general.

In early twentieth-century London, writers' house museums were a recently established institution. They set out both to preserve important physical aspects of English heritage, in common with the blue plaque scheme, and to cater to public interest in literary celebrity. The labelling of significant homes became an important step in the longer traditions of literary tourism and it had an influential role as part of the burgeoning conservation movement, pre-dating both the Ancient Monuments Protection Act (1882) and the National Trust (founded 1895). Commemorative plaques on houses began in London in 1867 with Byron's house in Cavendish Square and became especially popular in the early twentieth century (a standardized blue design began in 1903 and has been adopted, with modifications, since then; today, eight properties associated with

Woolf bear a blue plaque). Woolf's visits to the recently opened house museums, and her records of those visits, suggest a context through which she initially encountered memorial and exemplary shoes. This context then informed her creation of museum spaces and exhibited shoes in *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room*.

Several writers' houses opened as museums to the public in the period when Woolf was setting out on and consolidating her career. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, launched the Carlyle Memorial Fund in honor of his friend, purchasing his Cheyne Row house and opening it as the Carlyle Museum in 1895. In 1911, Samuel Johnson's house was bought and restored by Cecil Harmsworth, a Liberal MP, who also built a Curator's Cottage next door. A Memorial Committee was formed in 1920 to purchase the Keats/Brown house and "Keats House" opened to the public five years later. The Dickens Fellowship had long possessed his house at 48 Doughty Street; it also opened as a Museum in 1925. Woolf's visits to the Carlyle House, the Brontë Museum in Haworth, and other writers' house museums, spanned her adult life from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. These journeys, together with the essays and reviews they directly led to—including "Haworth, November, 1904," "Carlyle's House," "Literary Geography," "*Flumina Amem Silvasqu*" and "Great Men's Houses"—underpin and reinforce her deep interest in the relationship between the writer and the place of composition, which is most famously explored in *A Room of One's Own* but seems an almost constant preoccupation.

In her ground-breaking study of modernist writers' engagement with the heritage industry, Andrea Zemplýs suggests that literary heritage created "a narrow logic of place and expression . . . of setting and meaning" ("Night" 73) but that idea was also more widely promulgated. The notion that a notable person's house is worth preserving owed much to the Victorian domestic movement (Henry Cole, a self-proclaimed judge of domestic taste and the founder of the South Kensington Museum—later the V & A—was one of the founders of the blue plaque scheme), just as it did to the many late-Victorian domestic magazines, such as *Hearth and Home*, and advisors like Jane Panton and Rosamund Marriott Watson, who popularized the idea that homes are expressive of the people who inhabit and furnish them. The creation of "At Home" profiles in domestic magazines in the late-nineteenth century further cemented the idea that houses expressed their inhabitants. Indeed, writers' homes were a particular favorite of the "At Home" profile. The museums that began to

be created in writers' homes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a further development of the same principle. Spurred on by the success of these profiles, they apparently enabled open access to the intimate and supposedly revealing environment of the famous writer.⁶ While Zemgulys acknowledges that Woolf's "homage" to the dead writer and his house was also "critical," she accepts its presumption of the expressivity of environment. House museums are said to "afford Woolf a deeper knowledge of the beloved author who shapes his house in his image" ("Night" 73). As we will see, Woolf challenged the presumption of representative exemplarity that this suggests.

Zemgulys claims that Woolf "approves of literary geography generally" (that is, of the critical study of writers in their environments) and "tacitly approves of . . . literary tourism" (*Modernism* 163) but she was deeply sceptical of the practice. A deep unease with literary tourism and the apparent assumptions of house museums runs through Woolf's essays and reviews on the subject. She suggests setting "an examination . . . in place of entrance fee" at the Carlyle Museum—but that "the house would soon have to be shut up" ("Haworth" 5). Yet this unease is always tempered by curiosity. For one thing, she kept going to these museums, making several visits to 5 Cheyne Row (where she had the greatest personal connection). A notebook written in 1909 and "discovered" a decade ago contains Woolf's impressions of her third visit, undertaken in part as research for her review of *The Love Letters of Thomas and Jane Carlyle* for the *TLS*. Her conclusion on that volume—"the more we see the less we can label" (257)—seems especially apt also for her impression of the museum. Woolf's notebook confirms her suspicions of the enterprise: "Carlyle's house already has the look of something forcibly preserved" (*Carlyle* 3). (In her earlier essay on the Brontë parsonage at Haworth she had argued "it is better to read Carlyle in your own study than to visit the sound-proof room" [5].)

When Woolf writes at the beginning of "Haworth, November, 1904" that "I do not know whether pilgrimages to the shrines of famous men ought not to be condemned as sentimental journeys" (5), the double negative suggests a particular reluctance to say outright what offends her. This double-edged critical attitude runs through Woolf's writing on writers' houses and their personal effects. It might be traced back to the dichotomy of standards of taste that the house museums catered to, as both official establishments of the state's cultural heritage industry

and a populist opening of doors. Woolf is clearly uneasy with both these aspects: the museum's role in the creation of a tradition of "great men" and its sometimes facile engagement with their writing. In another early review-essay, "Literary Geography" (1905), she clearly distrusts both the sentimental fetishizing of objects and spaces ("the fact that Thackeray rang this very doorbell"[32]) as well as the mundane logging of addresses to trace any "influence" that may be ascribed to "surroundings." Yet at the same time, her first-person narrative shows the author viewing herself as both kinds of tourist: "We are either pilgrims from sentiment . . . or we are scientific in our pilgrimage." It is a subject to which she is often drawn. "We cannot get past a great writer's house without pausing to give an extra look into it and furnishing it as far as we are able with his cat and his dog, his books and his writing table," she admitted in "*Flumina Amem Silvasque*," a 1917 review of Edward Thomas's *A Literary Pilgrim in England*. Having admitted here, at her most enthusiastic and critically self-aware point, that this kind of tourism has "some true pleasure and profit" she yet adds immediately that she steps "rather stealthily perhaps . . . lest the ghosts of the dead should awaken us" (161). As both an actual visitor, and as a reader of works in the Pilgrimage series and other more "trashy books" of literary tourism (*Letters* 178), Woolf never shook off her discomfort—an unease that was both intellectual and social.⁷

Woolf's disquiet with house museums may be seen in her references to shoes. Shoes initially took on a "wondrous" significance for Woolf in her first article on literary tourism (she had earlier visited the Carlyle house at least twice), in which she records her visit to the Brontë museum in late 1904.⁸

The museum is certainly rather a pallid and inanimate collection of objects. An effort ought to be made to keep things out of these mausoleums, but the choice often lies between them and destruction, so that we must be grateful for the care that has preserved much. . . . Here are many autograph letters, pencil drawings, and other documents. But the most touching case—so touching that one hardly feels reverent in one's gaze—is that which contains the little personal relics, the dresses and shoes of the dead woman. The natural fate of such things is to die before the body that wore them, and because these, trifling and transient though they are, have survived, Charlotte Brontë the

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woman comes to life, and one forgets the chiefly memorable fact that she was a great writer. Her shoes and her thin muslin dress have outlived her. ("Haworth" 7)

The dry museum context provides the necessary boredom and banality in which the shoes and dress may shine.⁹ These shoes give a "thrill" because the surprising longevity of the object renders the owner a fragile subject. Amid "letters . . . drawings, and other documents" (as may well be found on any desk), these shoes appear to have their own specificity. Woolf's interest in shoes comes, then, not only from their context but from their specific role within the museum, as apparent bearers of personal testimony, where they seem to act both as exemplary of the individual writer and as singular things, shining forth from the banality of the setting. While it may be tempting to sense here the aura of the art-object—"Charlotte's shoes become sacred relics or Cinderella's slippers" comments Alison Booth (107)—Woolf's wider point is surely the more important. That is, that the museum space has constructed both a version of the Brontës (a version that it cannot finally contain) which is more in line with museum practice than with its subject, by promoting a form of viewing experience based on the reverential preservation of the past and the code of silent observation.

In a later essay, from 1917, Woolf goes on to consider the possibility that the shoes of writers in particular hold an "immensely personal" sway over us that others' shoes do not. The aura of writers is such that "even their old shoes have a way of being worn on this side rather than on that, which seems not gossip but revelation" ("*Flumina*" 161). It might appear from this remark that Woolf does indeed privilege the memorial shoe as a conduit to the private man; there is a hint of singular exemplarity in the special "revelation" of the shows of the writer that goes beyond the mere "gossip" of incidental detail. However, the immediate context of that sentence implies a different interpretation. The following sentence reads: "We speak of writers; the military or medical or legal pilgrim may exist, but we fancy that the present of his heroes' old boots would show him nothing but leather" (161). Woolf does not, then, evoke footwear in itself as the personal object of embodiment (or as "revelation") but instead acknowledges its arbitrariness in her comparison of different character-types, juxtaposing the writer's shoes with the soldier's (or doctor's or lawyer's) boots, which are mere leather. As much as Woolf could be attracted to the

intimation of the personal, she seems always to want to contextualize it.

The repeated return to the context of the museum seems to stem from a fundamental unease with a simplistic deductive, Holmesian interpretation of domestic space promoted by “At Home” profiles and some literary tourism. In “Small Talk about Meredith,” an essay published in 1919 at the time of writing *Night and Day*, Woolf argues that it is seldom desirable to know personal details of writers’ lives. “We do not often find ourselves in the position of listeners at keyholes,” she writes. But “if Meredith were to open the door he would find us for the most part devoutly examining the boots and umbrellas in the hall. Our deductions from these objects would probably provide him with some merriment” (5). Woolf is explicit: she criticizes the use of this “evidence” in “interpreting Meredith’s character.” Footwear can therefore be seen as Woolf’s means of foregrounding how literary tourism employed metonymic exemplarity in service of a reductive materialism. As a recurrent figure of the novelistic problem of how to read personal effects, the image of shoes becomes not so much an example in itself as an example of the example, consistently invoking a distrusted museum context.

Woolf’s privileging of the museological context over the lustre of the shoes can be seen by returning briefly to *Night and Day*. In her role of guide, Katharine Hilbery shows to visitors her family’s “little room . . . crowded with [ancestors’] relics” (9). Her speech is a “catalogue” (11), “for the thousandth time” recited “as if she knew what she had to say by heart” (10). This room is clearly based on house museums; as Zemgulys observes, its location in Cheyne Walk would place it just around the corner from the actual Carlyle museum (*Modernism* 179). The centrepiece of the family shrine is dedicated, with “special illumination” (9) to her grandfather-poet and contains a picture of him above his writing desk on which sits a pen, spectacles, and a manuscript of one of his poems. Despite these intimations of the work of writing, particular attention is drawn by the narrator and by the curatorial Katharine, to the poet’s slippers: “beneath the table was a pair of large, worn slippers, one of which Katharine picked up” (10) and she comments to Ralph Denham, her visitor and eventual lover, in an apparently jocular, off-handed and familiar way, on her grandfather’s considerable size. Not only has footwear again become the apparent example of the dead subject (it tells us his size, it appears to offer us a personal image), it has been carefully selected and exhibited in the home museum to offset the more formal or professional items on

display. Interestingly, the slipper is picked out as the only item Katharine explicitly handles, rather like the shoes "held out" by Mrs Flanders (*Jacob* 247), and unlike the untouched shoes under glass in the Brontë Museum.

It is clear, however, that these slippers have been carefully placed within a system of exemplification, within which they are then foregrounded to display their role as personal artefact. But this form of exhibited exemplification was so familiar to Woolf that her fictional shoes come to seem almost a cliché rather than a "wondrous" thing. This is the crucial, one might say structural, point of the example—that it is not inherently expressive in and of itself but instead illustrates the assumptions of its context. Shoes are therefore not things that display only their own materiality, in Brown's sense, and nor do they quite emit the singular wonder of exemplarity in Agamben's sense; instead Woolf places these epistemological questions within a quite specific historical and literary context.

In placing Katharine in this opening scene as a naïve attendant to the "relics" (9) of "those giant men" (10), Woolf has transferred her earlier exploration of memorial footwear into her fiction in order to say what she is more ambivalent about in her non-fiction: that literary tourism, with its new institution of the house museum, is a sham. This attitude is made clear in a later scene in "the little inner room" (332) of the family shrine. Katharine performs "her duties as show-woman" (333), pausing between items "for the right number of seconds" (332). But jadedness and disaffection now define Katharine's relationship with the great men of the past; this time it is the visitor, an "American lady who had come to be shown the relics" (331), who singles out the slippers. "'What! His very own slippers!' Laying aside the manuscript, she hastily grasped the old shoes, and remained for a moment dumb in contemplation of them" (333). The writers' shoes have become the focus of a satire on the "sentimental journeys" ("Howarth" 5) of the literary tourist's "dumb" admiration and despoiling "grasp." This scene might also be read as a self-referential display that mediates between two characteristic tones of Woolf's writing: the satirical dismissal of the uncultured, and the paternal anxiety awakened by autobiography—how can Woolf throw off her own "great men" without being uncultured? The "foolish" American tourist is said to be a "victim" of Katharine's ill humor, while Katharine, for whom "the ceremony of ancestor-worship had been more than usually oppressive" (335), is herself alienated from her personal and familial relations as a direct result of

the exhibition of these things. Both curator and visitor are estranged, in their different ways, by the experience of the museum. In this way, Woolf manages to be self-aware in the display of her own condescension just as she stages her own familial anxiety. Reading this novel alongside the non-fiction on literary tourism reveals that, for Woolf, footwear has become self-reflexive: it stands as an example of the museological example, as a display *of* the exhibition.

The example in *Jacob's Room*

Museological problems of space, selection and classification were also ordinary, homely issues. That the private house was already a sort of museum, in which the collecting and self-improvement of the Victorian public institution had been enjoined at home, was well known to Woolf, whose own domestic spaces ranged from the library of Leslie Stephen to the murals of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Douglas Mao has linked Woolf's not untypical childhood collecting of insects to the standard Victorian advice of C. A. Montessor that "every house ought to possess a 'Museum'" (30). What Mao calls the "systematizing Victorian paternal imperative" of collecting and classifying is reworked in *Jacob's Room* in particular, in which Woolf can be seen tracing the problems of museological arrangements as they prescribe forms of knowing.

In 1905, after the British Museum had announced the building of its new newspaper library at Colindale to take pressure off the main reading room and its stores, Woolf explicitly linked the museum to the home:

We have read of the over-burdened British Museum—how even its appetite for printed matter flags, and the monster pleads that it can swallow no more. This public crisis has long been familiar in private houses. One member of the household is almost officially deputed to stand at the hall door with flaming sword and do battle with the invading armies. Tracts, pamphlets, advertisements, gratuitous copies of magazines, and the literary productions of friends come by post, by van, by messenger. ("Decay" 24)

The problem of space, already well-known to the curators and librarians of the British Museum, would only be exacerbated by the Copyright Act of 1911 which created copyright libraries with entitlement to any book printed in Great Britain.¹⁰ The home museum similarly faced the

dual problem that the collection would never be completed, and that physical space would be exhausted. In *Night and Day*, the acquisition of a new proof-sheet of the great poet's threatens to disrupt the order of the display: "But was there room for it? Must it be hung on the staircase, or should some other relic give place to do it honour?" (335). The necessity of selection underlines that the choice of examples is "never innocent" (Miller 11) and their order implies a teleology.

The ordering of items, the necessity of choice, and therefore also the necessary implication of an active curator, are issues that Woolf explores more fully in *Jacob's Room*. In the description of Jacob's Cambridge room, the un-named and generally unobtrusive narrator guides readers from object to object, encountering Jacob's "incredibly shabby" slippers along the way. The account offers an intriguing mix of classified order and subjective impression.

Jacob's room had a round table and two low chairs. There were yellow flags in a jar on the mantelpiece; a photograph of his mother; cards from societies with little raised crescents; coats of arms, and initials; notes and pipes; on the table lay paper ruled with a red margin—an essay, no doubt—"Does History consist of the Biographies of Great Men?" There were books enough; very few French books, but then anyone who's worth anything reads just what he likes, as the mood takes him, with extravagant enthusiasm. Lives of the Duke of Wellington, for example; Spinoza; the works of Dickens; the *Faery Queen*; a Greek dictionary with the petals of poppies pressed to silk between the pages; all the Elizabethans. His slippers were incredibly shabby, like boats burnt to the water's rim. Then there were photographs from the Greeks, and a mezzotint from Sir Joshua—all very English. The works of Jane Austen too, in deference, perhaps, to someone else's standard. Carlyle was a prize. There were books on the Italian painters of the Renaissance, a *Manual of the Diseases of the Horse*, and all the usual textbooks. Listless is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker armchair creaks, though no one sits there. (48-49)

Several critics have listed off the items in this room as indisputably Jacob's and remain committed to an explanatory decoding of these objects as exemplary of Jacob's character.¹¹ Even for those who rightly question the

mimetic principles of the room's composition—for whom its things do not take us closer to Jacob but “take him further away” (Kazan 710)—the scene remains centered on Jacob: it still signals his absence and the impossibility of finally attaining the subject.¹² Yet Woolf's revisions are indicative of the subtle movement in this passage towards cutting a subject-object connection that it otherwise appears to play upon. She had initially written “Jacob's room is like most undergraduate rooms” (*Holograph* 37). By cutting the phrase, she has displaced the room from the pressure of typicality, and in her final description Woolf moves away from the “symptomatic” indication of character via objects in order to move towards her broader questioning of the arbitrariness of commemorative forms.

“The room is presented” Kazan observes, “through naming, listing, classifying, rather than describing” (710), but its point is also to question the presumptions of such formal divisions. The room appears initially in the shape of a sequential list (or list of sub-lists): first the furniture, then the mantelpiece, then the books; but the categorizing principle soon breaks down into individual items and repetition. The sub-list of books—as with the list of things in the room as a whole—veers between an apparent clarity and an opaque oddity: why the trouble of recognizing the specific sort of biography it is, or the use to which the Greek dictionary has been put, if one is merely going to note more casually and vaguely “Spinoza” or “all the Elizabethans”?

Intriguingly, the classifying impulse breaks down where the narrative voice encounters Jacob's slippers: the mini-lists of furniture, mantelpiece items and books are cut off by the slippers. To some extent, the slippers stand out: they give rise to the only figurative image in the passage (“like boats burnt to the water's rim”); they receive the only adverbial intensification (“incredibly”—a word perhaps to test our credulity); and they are the only things in the room which are described as “His”—all the others have no possessive pronoun. The room reads like an encounter with a house museum: empty of life, its arbitrary objects made to bear an expectation they cannot fulfil, all enclosed within the stale order of preservation. (No wonder Carlyle is here.) But what of the slippers—are these “revelation”? Do they have “a way of being worn on this side rather than that” (“*Flumina*” 161) which is the trace of their aura? These slippers arrest neither us nor our guide who returns to wall pictures and more books. The moment is not one of “revelation” but one that again contextualizes the shoes within the museological, calling attention to their age

and wear, for sure, but also to their setting, a collection from which they have not escaped. The shoes remain within the curator's frame, encased by the respectful distance of "There were" (repeated four times). Woolf's revisions to this passage show that she took care to imply, without showing, the narrator's partially-embodied characterization. She eliminated all three first-person references by the narrator, and by also changing the only direct second-person address to readers ("you know how anyone reads who's worth anything, just what he likes" became "anyone who's worth anything reads just what he likes") she created a more impersonal tone. The narrative voice is both cataloguing and intruding, like a curator who cannot fully extricate herself from the exhibition; her repression can be felt behind the glassy manner (*Holograph* 37-38).

The Cambridge room explicitly makes exemplification its central concern. Consider that curious "For example" in the middle of the passage. This oddly suggestive but uncertain phrase is indicative of the room-list as a kind of disorganized taxonomy. The phrase seems to carry four possible significances. One reading is that the phrase may refer to all the books as examples of what one might read "as the mood takes him." In this case, these books are not necessarily in the room at all and are merely suggested by the narrative voice. The second possibility is that "for example" refers to those "books enough" on or by the table, and these are examples of some of them. In the third reading, "for example" again refers to the books which were there but in this case the list of books is exhaustive and "for example" refers specifically to the biographies of Wellington (the phrase is grammatically sectioned off with "Lives of the Duke of Wellington"). In this reading, the list merely begins, seemingly at random, with this example and appears to be a list in no particular order and with no principle of coherence other than that these books (apparently) were there. The fourth reading of "for example"—and this applies whether the books are there or not—posits Wellington himself as the example. In this version, the narrator supposes that there were "Lives" in this room (perhaps the only kind of life), in accordance with the imagined title of the possible essay ("Does History consist of the biographies of Great Men?"). In this variant, the narrator promises that there were biographies of some kind, just as we are promised that the paper on the table comprises an essay. Here, Wellington is the apt example of the Great Man in History. This "for example" promises the example as model, an exemplary figure, someone "Great." Fittingly, then, the phrase "for example" has called at-

tention to the artifice of the scene and the failure of rooms such as this to exemplify their inhabitants. As Woolf remarked of those who viewed Jane Carlyle's pictures: "did they think that her house and her had been like that?" (*Carlyle* 3).

Jacob's room is therefore a play on exemplarity and an exercise in classification—more coded exhibition than personal insight. There is no "revelation" to be made here. In her discussion of some of Woolf's things, Rachel Bowlby has discussed a list written by Lady Fry (which Woolf reproduces in her biographical study of Roger Fry [17]). The list is divided into two classifications, "Things that were not—: Things that were: when I was a little child." Lady Fry's list runs incongruous items side-by-side: "hoardings with posters; Japanese anemones; spring mattresses" were not; "tippets and sleeves (in one); snuff-boxes and Chartist's" were. The movement between items seems to be based on little or no principle of order. As Bowlby puts it, Lady Fry's "eccentricity in not observing the rules of different orders of 'things' serves to show up the more pervasive eccentricity of 'common-sense' classifications in their necessary arbitrariness" (121). Woolf's sub-lists of the Cambridge room may suggest that a necessary fiction of order has been created with its own exemplary specimens. In this sense, Woolf would seem to be echoing the Kuhnian definition of paradigms: these exemplary things have created the classification and the model, i.e. we see the room as a whole in its arrangement of distinct parts (books, furniture, etc.) because of the exemplarity noticed by the narrator. Indeed, the novel is premised on the impossibility of escaping systems of classification just as it shows them to be delusional, if necessary, models of knowledge. So Woolf carefully constructs the narrator's quest for Jacob as a vain search for a unique object: although Jacob may be associated with the word "distinction" (94), the narrator is always aware that such distinction is created through a series of types, characters and classification. "But surely, of all futile occupations this of cataloguing features is the worst," she says. The sense prevails of a necessary, if fictional, form of order. Remarking on the theatre's division of audience into "stalls, boxes, amphitheatre, gallery," the narrator states the necessity of the "system of classification" that exists "to prevent us from being submerged by chaos" (91). Such "simplicity" is required, she suggests, but it does not overcome the problem of selection and exemplification: "the difficulty remains—one has to choose." While the epistemological problems of the museum reside in this necessarily arbitrary creation of order, Woolf shows that it is also an everyday, homely, and personal pursuit as well.

The remarkable shift in tense within the description of Jacob's room underscores the root problem of the inability of classification to be final or definite. The presentation of this scene has an unaccountable dual split—between simple past and present tenses, as between definite and indefinite articles: “Jacob's room had . . .” and “Listless is the air in an empty room.” This is itself a narrative encapsulation of the problem thrown up by the order of things—the problem being not only its artifice but also its very presumption of *being*. As Frances Ferguson remarks in her re-reading of Foucault, the radical complexity of the order of things is not just the arbitrariness of classification but also the fundamental question of what it is, or what appears to be, *possible* to classify: all orders of things have already decided on the fundamental question of what *is* and can be ordered (311–12). But in foregrounding its doubt in exemplification, and in its final shift of tense of the “textual ghost” (Trotter 94), Woolf's narrative of the room destroys ontological security. What, and who, exists in the room remains uncertain. Jacob's room, and Woolf's footwear generally, render permeable that distinction between “what is” and “what is not” (as in Lady Fry's list). Shoes in Woolf, then, point less towards a subject than they do towards problems of classification and selection. But if this seems a peculiarly abstract rendering of objects, the final point of this argument shows that Woolf's display of exemplification always involves a grounded, indeed historicized, perspective.

The experience of the umbrella

I have argued that Woolf used shoes with which to foreground questions of exemplification as a museological and novelistic practice, deriving her impetus from house museums and literary tourism. But her response to museums crucially goes further than this. In highlighting the role of shoes in these early essays and fictions, Woolf can also be seen drawing attention to the historicity of the object, pointing out the role of the observer and the history and context of museum preservation. In her numerous essays on literary tourism and in *Night and Day* and *Jacob's Room*, she carefully locates the roles of both curator and observer as physical, intrusive presences. The somatic experience of the museum—carefully regulated in Jacob's Cambridge room as also by Katherine Hilbery—takes on greater prominence in her fictional versions of the British Museum and the Acropolis in those novels. This focus on the personal experience of

the observer (and the curator) leads to recognition of the way in which museological experience is also somatic, and in turn prompts a historicization of the museum through the situatedness of one's place in relation to it. Woolf therefore extends her reading of exemplification into a broader critique of museum culture. She suggests that the epistemological question of order and exemplification was at the same time a phenomenological question of behaviour: the seemingly intellectual problem of classification was also the personal experience of dishevelment.

The regulation of museum-goers' behaviour had been a long-held, and often explicit, ambition for cultural institutions, for whom any noise or affective behaviour could represent a disturbance to its imagined air of respectful, silent contemplation. "We learnt to read and see alike in the museum," which dreams of a "total surveillance," writes Barbara Black (35). One model for the museums' regulation of its visitors was the practice of leaving umbrellas at the entrance—attempting to enforce an inside/outside distinction that segregated the natural elements from the cultural exhibition (implying the timelessness of the preserved artefacts) and instilling an air of reverence. Moreover, as many visitors realized, the deposited umbrella also embodied a code of personal values that were to be left at the door. When Adorno wrote in the 1930s that the selective museum visitor "leaves his naiveté outside along with his cane and his umbrella" (185) he surely knew that the umbrella had functioned as a symbol of codified behaviour in cultural institutions for decades.

In his 1858 essay, "Please to Leave Your Umbrella," Charles Dickens had constructed a monologue upon a visit to Hampton Court Palace in which he argues with an imaginary interlocutor over why his umbrella must always be left at the entrance to public sites such as museums, libraries and churches. Leaving one's umbrella signifies surrendering "individuality, the true perception of every object on the face of the earth" (485), "private judgment," "individual opinions," "moral distinctions" (486) and "any suspicions I had about me" (487). For Dickens, it represents all that is most individual, and therefore most prized, in the possessor: that which allows him to bring experience and judgement to the "wearisomely stiff and unimaginative forms" of the museum. When Leonard Bast displays only a dubious retreiver over his umbrella in *Howards End*—he loses it at a concert before retrieving it at the cost of his honesty—Forster partially echoes Dickens's complaint against the social regulation of culture and adds to it his own scepticism about the ability of institutions to direct a

worthwhile individual taste. Bast's umbrella is as useless as his functional reading of Ruskin and possibly even harmful. Forster's character would surely fail the entrance examination which Woolf had considered a possible doorway into the writer's museum. For Dickens and Forster, the umbrella is the codified symbol of a liberalism divided between public education, via cultural heritage, and the rights of the individual.

That Woolf was aware of this code is evident from a brief comparison between the delusional expressivity of shoes and the repressive socialization of the umbrella in her 1927 essay "Street Haunting." Here the observer-flâneuse marvels at a dwarf woman in a shoe shop. "She got up and pirouetted before a glass which reflected the foot only in yellow shoes, in fawn shoes, in shoes of lizard skin. . . . Seeing nothing but her feet, she imagined perhaps that the rest of her body was of a piece with those beautiful feet" (483). Woolf's point is that these misleading shoes are items of an imaginative encounter. Returning home the flâneuse is confronted by the fact that she is a "variegated" self, "all of a mixture." At this point Woolf introduces the umbrella as icon of the repression of non-conformist "instincts and desires." The umbrella is the veneer of the "good citizen" who must "put his umbrella in the stand like the rest" in a vain attempt to "compel unity" for himself. It is not emblematic of that "good citizen" but of the false creation of the image of him. Where the shoe offered a (deluded) possibility of knowledge or insight to the woman, the umbrella provides repressive (male) control. If Woolf can be thought of as an inheritor of the liberal tension between public benefits and private taste, her uneasiness is palpably stronger than that of Dickens or Forster. In Woolf's hands the umbrella is no longer a novelistic tool that is indicative of character, as Dickens and Forster had it (Mrs Gamp; Bast); for her, the umbrella exemplifies not the individuality of its subject but the wrestle for control of cultural space, which was both gendered and somatic.

In *Jacob's Room*, the British Museum and the Acropolis are juxtaposed in part by the behaviour of their users, and in particular by their umbrellas. Of course, these are very different museum spaces, and that is central to Woolf's point. As with Forster's Bast, Miss Marchmont carries a "shabby umbrella" (147) which she retrieves on exiting the library prior to viewing the so-called Elgin Marbles. This ritual brings people together, having been kept apart by the silence of the reading room. "The public collected in the hall to receive their umbrellas" and "for the most part" they wait

“very patiently”; the process is even personally beneficial since “to stand and wait” is “soothing.” The regulation of collective behaviour at the British Museum and its reading room works successfully. The comparative lack of regulation at the Acropolis stands in contrast to Jacob’s London experience, and is one with the general sense of permissiveness he finds in Athens. Jacob’s experience at the Acropolis is as much physical as it is intellectual: outdoors rather than indoors, of course; the climb, the heat, and the light, all influence his observation. He sits to read on “a drum of marble conveniently placed . . . in the shade, while the Erechtheum blazed white in front of him,” that is, the Erechtheum minus those parts which Lord Elgin had taken and eventually sold to the British Government: “Greece was over; the Parthenon in ruins” (208). Initially the “ladies with green and white umbrellas” are noticed but unobtrusive, yet soon they are “opening and shutting their umbrellas just beneath him” (209) and interrupting his note-taking. (It would be expected that women would carry umbrellas in the Athens heat, but Woolf still notes them and links them to intrusiveness.) As Jacob moves across the Erechtheum he is suddenly confronted by one of the “ladies” in “tight boots” who “perched on a block of marble with a kodak pointed at his head,” prompting his silent outburst (“damn these women!”) and a return to his reading. The intrusion of the umbrellas signals the almost violent entry of women into “culture” and concludes with the frisson of Jacob’s “furtively” looking at “the goddess on the left-hand side” who provoked “all sorts of things in his head” (210). The disruptive potential of women, signalled via umbrellas, is repressed by the silent gaze of propriety at the British Museum but interrupts the silent reading of Jacob at the Acropolis. In this way, the umbrella can be seen as the object of the observer as the shoes are the object of the observed.

Woolf’s accounts of these different museum spaces are reminders that they are public and worldly. Two points may be drawn from this. First, these spaces underline the point that the museum’s order is contingent and transient. The British Museum reading room is a circular body of classification containing “the whole collection of human beings” (146); in its “conglomeration of knowledge” (147) “each compartment . . . was safe and dry” (148). Such apparent order is not evident in Athens, which is “the oddest combination, the most incongruous assortment” (204). In this mixture of the “suburban” and the “immortal” lies a historical force that unsettles appropriation: no amount of rearranging the furniture will re-

cover a "timeless" past. Second, these spaces are inevitably personal. Woolf does not rail against the exclusions perpetrated by "culture" as Dickens or Forster might have, or as she would later in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), because the space has already failed to exclude what is most significant—the disruptive potential of personal, including bodily, experience. At the Acropolis the women's umbrellas are both ordinary and expected (precisely not items of exclusion) but also crucially disruptive. Woolf holds up the umbrella as part of a comparison of contexts and experiences. The umbrella's role is therefore to underline what was implicit in shoes—that museological experience occurs within everyday lives, even in ordinary rooms. It is with this point that Woolf historicizes the museum.

The experience of the museum comprises a means of historicizing it. It may be expected that what is inevitably a site of displacement (represented most glaringly by the missing Parthenon "marbles") should lead to the estrangement of observers. There is, then, a historical relationship, and often a jarring dissonance, between observer and object that produces the kind of affected personal displacement Woolf knew too well. This may be why objects such as shoes could tantalize only to deceive, their work of exemplification inevitably a bathetic disappointment. In her essays on house museums, as in her fictions of museums and objects, Woolf had drawn attention to the ways in which the physical context of display shapes one's responses. The Carlyle house is "forcibly preserved" (3) so that it is "incongruous now, set between respectable family mansions"; the generations that followed the Brontës instigated a division between path and graveyard that was "a little space between life and death" (7), diminishing the permeability of animate and inanimate; revisiting the Carlyle house in the 1930s, it seems odd that it lacks "as the house agents put it, bath, h. and c., gas fires in the bedrooms, all modern conveniences and indoor sanitation" ("Great" 296). In the fictional museums, as well, responses are historicized. As with Katharine, whose curatorial routine turns her attitude towards the "great men," it is the historical dissonance in one's relation to the cultural artefact that gives rise to an affective response. As Woolf admitted at Haworth, "one hardly feels reverent" (7). The account of Jacob's Cambridge room, with its sudden and unexplained switch from past to present tense, is one means by which Woolf could signal the historicity of the object, that is, its situatedness in a present that attempts to know itself in relation to the past. Jacob's visit to the Acropolis is inevitably accompanied by that symbol of literary tourism, a Baedeker.

This emphasis on the mediation of the object by the history of its preservation and exhibition signals a further difference from the liberalism of Forster and Dickens. While they had sought to defend individual taste, and circumscribe its limits, against a preaching cultural authority, Woolf's attention is directed at the intellectual and physical construction of that authority.

Woolf's dual focus is on the museum's epistemological assumptions and the experience of the observer. The famous ending of *Jacob's Room* finds his London house in a state of disorder. "Nothing arranged" laments Bonamy; "Such confusion everywhere!" exclaims Betty Flanders, holding out those old shoes. It is surely this setting of the inadequacy of exemplification and classification, with a woman handling the exhibit, which is the context into which "a pair of Jacob's old shoes" (246-47) should be placed. It was Woolf's immersion in the heritage industry that triggered this interest in shoes and enabled her to read them as part of a museological code. She shows how shoes stood for a reductive sort of metonymic exemplification that she resists but which critics have often repeated. For Woolf finally reminds us that exemplification is not only an epistemological question (or an ontological one, as Agamben concludes) but also a historical and personal one. Indeed, it is historical because it is personal. In their handling of the shoe exhibits, Betty Flanders and the American tourist to Richard Alardyce's relics, display not only the museological construction of exemplification but also their own, and our own, inevitable implication in the exhibition. I have not used Woolf's shoes, then, to exemplify a theory of examples or of things, but as guides suggesting that such theories are already historically constructed features of the fictions we experience.

Notes

1. For Derrida, the example is not a crutch to understanding but a constitutive part of that which it is said to exemplify. In the context of his reading of the notion of the frame, and in a reading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Derrida refers to examples as "prostheses which replace nothing" (79).
2. This phrase is from Woolf's story; Brown quotes it (7, 22) having used it without quotation marks in each of his first three pages (1, 2, 3).
3. In 1926, E. M. Forster referred to "the pathos of the closing scene" (105), and recent critics have developed the idea. Douglas Mao says that the shoes are

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"relics" (55) and even if they "can never be substitution," they refer us to the dead Jacob. For R. S. Koppen it is the "pairedness" of Jacob's shoes that makes them "represent character" (34). Even where critics have emphasized the shoes' inability to signify anything conclusive, they tend to grasp some hope of possible redemption. Thus Hermione Lee argues that although Jacob leaves "a name, objects, letters, bits and pieces, a pair of old shoes" which are "useless as identifiers of personality," she nonetheless appears to hold out for some tangible reassurance: "What may possibly remain . . . is the imaginative life which Jacob was trying to sustain" (89).

4. Van Gogh's paintings of "peasant shoes" (35) were for Heidegger "the example" of the death of a mode of being. In showing that Heidegger ascribed to the shoes a pathos they did not necessarily represent, Derrida found Heidegger's own "pathetic collapse" (262). On the other hand, in post-World War Two museum displays of the footwear of holocaust victims, shoes do bear the weight of pathos. Perhaps the most viewed exhibit of this kind is the display of shoes at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. As Jeffrey David Feldman points out, similar displays had long been made in Soviet museums (250).

5. Silver argues that these notes formed an important plank in Woolf's construction of a theory of reading, which she developed in "How Should One Read a Book?" (October 1926) and "Phases of Fiction" (1929).

6. There were versions of "At Home" profiles in, for instance, *The World* from 1876 and in *Hearth and Home* from 1892. I discuss these in my forthcoming study of domestic objects and Edwardian and modernist fiction.

7. The letter was to Violet Dickinson from mid-February 1905. Zemgulys argues that the review of *A Literary Pilgrimage* shows that Woolf was sympathetic to literary tourism. But Thomas's book is concerned with writers' country environments, not with house museums. It is much more a literary reading than a tourist exercise. Indeed, Woolf states that "Thomas was as far removed from our imaginary pilgrim as well may be" (*Flumina* 161). Her praise for Thomas's book is precisely on the grounds that he does not "pin a poet down" but instead allows his interpretation to spin as much from the disconnections between poets and places. On the other hand, in an earlier review (of *The Dickens Country* by F. G. Kitton) she had vented her dissatisfaction with the simplicities of literary tourism: "the books that try to impress upon the mind the fact that great men were once alive because they lived in this house or in that are those that seem to have least reason for their being" ("Literary" 35).

8. At the time, the museum was located not in the parsonage once inhabited by the family but on the rented upper floor of the Yorkshire Penny Bank where it

was also home to the Brontë Society. The Society had been formed in 1893 in an effort to bring together many of the keepsakes and memorabilia of the family which had circulated since the auction of Patrick Brontë's effects in 1861 had created a market for Brontëana.

9. For the culturally-conditioned mode of looking that produces the wonder of the observer facing the displayed object, see Greenblatt. Thomas Carlyle himself wrote much of the wonder that he saw being thoroughly quashed by industrial materialism (see "Signs of the Times"). It is clear from the presence of the dress that shoes are not a *necessary* example of the practices of exhibition but a possible example: other objects could have functioned in this way.

10. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of ethnographic artefacts in the British Museum multiplied more than tenfold from 3,700 in 1851 to 38,000 in 1897. Many of these were permanently displayed, "placed hugger-mugger in vastly overcrowded cases." New acquisitions were simply added to the already congested space (Wilson 194).

11. Batchelor says of this paragraph: "It lists his possessions—invitations, a photograph of his mother—and books which reflect his view of himself (a man of virile tastes)" (67). Wall refers to Jacob's "emblematic pipe" (317) and Robert Kiely says, "the objects in Jacob's room lend themselves easily to interpretations about the character of the young man who inhabits the space—his youth, masculinity, class, intellectual promise, literary taste" (155). Ted Bishop's helpful edition and introduction argues that in the draft "Woolf is using rooms as an index of character" (xviii) and that she removes certain rooms (such as "A Woman's College") in order that "Jacob and his room . . . progressively defined one another" (xxiii).

12. David Trotter's tantalising account of this scene echoes (and accepts) Woolf's blunt analysis of the difference between Edwardians and Georgians. Trotter argues that it is "the change of tense" in the final lines that "destroys the elaborate Edwardian symptomatology." He concludes, rightly, that "Nothing in this room expresses" Jacob, only to row back from that conclusion by adding "—except a textual ghost" (94), that is, the final lines in present tense. My analysis takes issue with his implication that the "symptomatology" of objects is present even prior to the shift of tense.

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